

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2002

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice State and Judiciary
H309 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf:

As you prepare your recommendations for the FY 2003 Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations bill, we urge that you include \$250 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Program, administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service of the Department of Commerce.

A growing number of salmon, steelhead and other anadromous fish species native to the Pacific Northwest and California have been listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). According to biologists, salmon have disappeared from nearly half of their traditional spawning habitats in the Pacific Coastal states.

While salmon extinction would be unacceptable to the region, recovery measures required under the ESA carry their own economic costs. Additional ESA listings could necessitate severe limitations on the use of rivers and streams for consumption, irrigation, recreation, and the discharge of treated wastewater. Sport and commercial fishing industries have already suffered tremendously because of the declines in salmon.

It is essential that recovery measures be implemented expeditiously and effectively before more fish populations reach endangered levels and more habitat falls under ESA jurisdiction. This is important for the continued health of these historic salmon runs but to avoid increasing the regulatory burden on industry and agriculture. Delaying implementation would also create the need for more expensive and intensive future recovery efforts.

The cumulative cost of the recovery program is estimated at several billion dollars. The states and tribes have committed substantial resources to restoration programs, but the amount of funding needed to fully implement a successful and comprehensive restoration program far exceeds the financial resources they have available. More federal matching funds are needed.

The President's FY 2003 budget request for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund contains a total of \$90 million for states and tribes. However, this is only a small portion of the total amount required. An increase in federal funding to \$250 million for FY03 is essential to assure that the economies of the states in the Pacific Northwest and California are not threatened and endangered, along with the salmon.

We also request that the funding be divided evenly among the states of Alaska, California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, after funding is set aside for allocation among the eligible tribes. It will ensure that critical salmon recovery projects can begin in Idaho, while simultaneously maintaining and expanding recovery efforts in Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington. The equal allocation of funds among these five states, coupled with the tribal assistance, is consistent with legislation that has passed the House with overwhelming support. The House approved the bill, H.R. 1157 (the Pacific Salmon Recovery Act), last June by a vote of 418-6.

We very much appreciate your consideration of this funding request to assist the states and tribes in their salmon recovery efforts.

Sincerely,

Walter Simpson

Nancy Pelosi

Barack Stupak

George Miller

Tom Lantos

Eul Blument

Jim McDermott

Tom Udall

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